

The total area acquired specifically for the settlement of ex-servicemen as at 31st March, 1947, is as follows :—

	Acres.
Purchased by negotiation	320,257
Acquired : Section 51 of the Servicemen's Settlement and Land Sales Act, 1943—	
Subdividable properties	59,000
Single-unit	26,095
Acquired : Part II of the Servicemen's Settlement and Land Sales Act, 1943	36,767
Total	442,119

As at 31st March, 1947, 691 ex-servicemen had been established on 204,665 acres either on permanent tenure or on a wages or other similar basis with the promise of a permanent tenure upon completion of the development programme. The number of ex-servicemen established in the various districts is as follows :—

Land District.	Number.	Land District.	Number.
North Auckland	53	Nelson	10
Auckland	220	Westland	..
Hawke's Bay	56	Canterbury	83
Gisborne	32	Otago	18
Taranaki	53	Southland	35
Wellington	103		
Marlborough	28	Total	691

The figures given above do not include ex-servicemen who have been assisted by way of rehabilitation loans to purchase established farms on their own account.

As will be seen from the remarks by the officers in charge of development operations in the various districts, given later in this report, progress continues to be hampered by the unprecedented demand for the materials which are essential to extensive land-development operations. Difficulties in the procurement of fencing-wire, water-piping, farm machinery, and building-materials has in many instances caused delay in completing the development of certain sections, and in other cases the Department has been compelled to defer operations on a number of blocks, which will require extensive development before they can be made fit for settlement. It is pleasing to report, however, that during the past year the supply position in respect of fertilizer improved sufficiently to enable the Department to effect improvement to pastures on many of the blocks being prepared for settlement by ex-servicemen.

As development of the sections on the blocks is completed, sections are made available for selection by ex-servicemen, and this policy will continue to be followed.

Comments by the officers in charge of operations in the various districts giving information concerning the development and settlement of the blocks during the year are as follows :—

SUPERINTENDENT OF LAND DEVELOPMENT, AUCKLAND

During the year a further fifteen properties totalling 7,887 acres, were taken over in this district for development for settlement by ex-servicemen. This brought the number of development blocks capable of early settlement to thirty-nine and the area to 21,568 acres. It is estimated that these properties will subdivide into 158 sections, of which seventy-two are occupied by ex-servicemen, and it is anticipated that a like number will be settled during the coming year. In addition to the above 21,568 acres, there are under the control of this office twenty-four blocks totalling 142,085 acres, on which large-scale operations will be necessary extending over a period of several years before settlement can be considered. Thirty-four ex-servicemen are in occupation of sections on the long-term development blocks, and a further thirty-eight men should be settled next year.